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EGOCRACY (HOWARD ROUSE / SONIA ARRIBAS) OR CAPITAL POWER? ON LACAN'S CAPITALIST DISCOURSE

ECONOFICTION, FREUD, LACAN, MARXISM, OBJECT A, PSYCHOANALYSIS, GENERICSCIENCE SURPLUS VALUE

...quelque chose de follement astucieux, hein?

J. Lacan, Milan 12.5.1972

There is more literature on Lacan's Capitalist Discourse than one might think. However, there are only a few titles in the German-speaking world compared to the French and, above all, English-language literature. Of the approximately 30 titles known to us, there are only three books. Most authors, it has to be said, are overwhelmed by this discourse because, as

psychoanalysts, they have hardly taken any notice of Marx. So it is no wonder that they reduce this discourse to consumption and or consumerism, and literally ignore production. The book by Rouse & Arribas (2011) and the book by Samo Tomsic (The Capitalist Unconscious, 2015) are laudable exceptions, because they give the discourse, on which Lacan himself only made rudimentary (and sometimes quite cryptic) comments (which the volume by Ulrich Hermanns (2011) manages to top), the topicality, explosiveness and sharpness it deserves. For the German-speaking world, the book by Christoph Bialluch (Das entfremdete Subjekt, 2011) with chapters 3.2 and 3.3 and 7. offers a detailed overview of our topic from the perspective of what Lacan said about it in Seminars XVI and XVII. Bialluch and Rouse & Arribas are quite close in their views on Lacan in relation to capitalism, despite major differences in their approach; Bialluch's advantage over Rouse & Arribas: he reflects on the political consequences...

Considering that these experiments by Lacan, Deleuze & Guattari and Lyotard were all written in the early 70s, 45 years ago, it is remarkable not only how prescient (but largely misunderstood) they were at the time, but how current they are (perhaps only now).

The French edition of Seminar XVII published by Éditions du Seuil (1991) has a photo by Gilles Caron on the cover: "Daniel Cohn-Bendit face à un CRS". It would be more correct (from the point of view of the picture) to say: Un CRS avec le petit Daniel. For there is in fact a representative of state power standing very tall on the entire half of the picture (left), quite martial with helmet and chinstrap, without his physiognomy being recognizable. He stands there like the embodiment of S1 in the Lord's discourse. On the right-hand side, or more precisely: in the lower right (!) quarter, the little student Daniel stands and looks up - grinning mischievously - at the state power, as if to say: soon I will be standing in your position, as is the case (thanks to the small reversal) in the chapter disc. However, the student does not yet seem to know that S1 is waiting for him in the place of truth, and that he will work for this very S1 in the discourse of the university and produce knowledge. We do not know whether he has learned from Lacan that structures take to the streets.

We can (and want to) largely follow Rouse&Arribas, because we find the way in which they work out the partly hidden social relevance of Freud's and Lacan's theorizations, develop them further with the help of Marx and, in particular, bring together the law of value (Marx) with Lacan's axiomatics, very successful. Nevertheless, we would like to point out points (especially in the last part II.2.2.) where we consider additions necessary and would like to express criticism. And because they have not drawn any (above all political) conclusions at all from their presentation, we will include Bialluch here, who not only deals with the discourse of capitalism, but is also interested in the discourse of (failed?) socialism (e.g. 301f, 432ff).

Pre-capitalist vs. capitalist subject constitution

The central result of R&A's elaborations is a comparison of the position of the subject and the genesis of the subject in precapitalist societies and in capitalism on the basis of five subpoints.

The following applies to precapitalist societies:

1. the "more-enjoyment of the master is a more-enjoyment of consumption, that of the servant

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- one of production. Moreover, it is impossible for master and servant to conceive of themselves as self-identical. 236f.
- 2. the servant does not lose his knowledge in the "discourse of the master".
- 3. there is a non-relationship, defined as incapacity, between the production and loss of a surplus product and the hidden division of the subject. The "discourse of the master" thus fundamentally excludes any experience of imagination the hierarchy is understood as self-evident, quasi God-given, which secures this "impossible" relationship.
- (4) Since the "discourse of the master" suppresses the division of the subject, an experience of "the unconscious" also seems impossible, since this is inconceivable without the subject's supposed self-identity.
- 5 The three registers constitute a "closed whole" or a "sphere" in the "discourse of the master". Satisfaction and knowledge are organized spherically. The symbolic-imaginary signifier of "mastery" (S1) fully subordinates the real * to the labor of the working subject.

In capitalism, on the other hand, the following applies:

- in capitalism, the enjoyment of more consists in the "loss of a loss"; in both the capitalist and the worker, the loss that has taken place (the impossible task of commanding labor; the impossibility of representing labor) is attempted to be compensated for by the development of a supposedly self-identical ego.
- 2) The worker is deprived of his knowledge (and his means of production).
- 3. the incapacity concerns the relationship and non-relationship between the divided subject and the rule of (capitalist) discourse. This (non-)relationship assumes the omnipotence of the ego in the form of a fundamental phantasm, which shields the impossible discourse of capitalism. More-enjoyment always involves an overlapping of consumption and production.
- 4. the primal repression consists in the repression of the awareness of working for a master. The experience of the ego and the experience of the unconscious are two sides of the same coin (the core of the ego is unconscious).
- 5 The three registers are divided into their parts and remain intertwined. The previously closed sphere of satisfaction is broken open and the split subject and the unconscious are constituted.

This leads to the following conclusions:

- 1. the linguistic level: representation through signifiers initially always involves a loss, which is metaphorically referred to as entropy. In other words: something is always missing. In particular, Lacan's example of the worker (Sem XVII; 60) seems to have a scope that he himself probably hardly intended, as it represents the "jumping point" of the capitalist mode of production: the actually realized work cannot be adequately captured by means of a system of signifiers (and, as is well known, certainly not by means of an apparatus of signifiers reduced to quantity).
- 2. the loss always has an "other side"; an attempt at compensation takes place simultaneously with its emergence; in this respect it is abbreviated to speak of a loss, rather it is always a matter of a "loss of the loss". The latter represents the "surplus enjoyment", in the original "surplus-jouissance" or "plus-de-jouir". The loss that has taken place is always about a loss of being, i.e. less about the loss of products. And this loss of being is attempted to be compensated for. It is therefore always about the part of the real that is not captured by

signifiers or the symbolic. This situation results in the split subject. However, the split is not tolerated and is attempted to be compensated for by the fantasy of a complete, omnipotent "I". In this respect, this (imaginary) ego is the place and the instance of "more enjoyment". However, as the loss cannot really be compensated for and the ego split cannot be resolved, this failure inevitably leads to a repetition of the attempt at compensation, to never-ending repetitions and thus to a compulsion to repeat. More enjoyment and repetition are therefore always necessarily linked, two sides of the same coin. For the capitalist subject, this means in concrete terms: the capitalist "I" is based on the tendency of an "entropic" confusion and simultaneous identification of the commodity of labor power (imaginary) with the actual labor (real) on which it is based. In other words, "capitalism is a social or societal order that produces and divides the subject in relation to and vis-à-vis the two registers of the imaginary and the symbolic; more precisely, it is a social or symbolic order that produces and reproduces a subject divided between the imaginarity of the I and the real subjectivity of its labor. (212)

(3) It is always the body that enjoys. The enjoyment of the body stems from a marking gesture that always comes from the "other". From the Other of language, from the symbolic order and, quite specifically, from the symbolic structure of capitalism. Since there is no metalanguage, it is always enjoyed in a historically specific way. Each specific social order requires a different type and scope of loss of being and correspondingly different attempts at compensation, which are transmitted by means of education, among other things.

4 Knowledge is a means of enjoyment. In the discourse of the master it is in the place of labor. in the discourse of capitalism in the place of the agent. Knowledge based on links of signification begins with the single move. (Laboring) knowledge produces loss and enjoyment. (In feudalism, the servant cannot really grasp the loss in depth due to a lack of ideas of equality and compensates for it - enjoying it - with the idea of being born a servant). In the discourse of capitalism, the knowledge in the place of the agent directly determines the loss/enjoyment in the place of labor (this is where object a is now placed). In addition to students (according to R&A), this is also where all workers find themselves when they are implanted with the mark/message of "lifelong learning", of a "knowledge society", when they fend off the loss of being associated with work/learning and try to compensate for it by imagining themselves as subjects of knowledge.

5 Social and economic relations are inseparable from and inextricably intertwined with the operations of language. As an unavoidable consequence of this, the subject of these relations can by no means be regarded simply as "super-structural" or "ideological" in its consciousness hovering over these relations. Instead, the subject must be conceived as inhabiting the inner structure of these relations. This is a fundamental consequence of Lacan's concept of "discourse". A "discourse" never divides the subject between the imaginary of an ideological superstructure and the real of an economic basis. If there is always something like a conjunction or disjunction between these two registers within the subject, then this must be understood as the result of a conjunctive or disjunctive logic internal or immanent to the symbolic, i.e. as the fundamentally social and historical specificity of a discourse itself. (222/3)

The basic linguistic axiom

R&A refuse to call Lacan's (214) basic axiom, which is not only psycho-, but ultimately also

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sociolinguistic, transcendental. Nor do they wish to understand it in structuralist or purely symbolic terms. They postulate that the status of this axiom is transhistorical. But are they not here confusing the historical-empirical (contingent) form of a discourse with the condition of its possibility? In other words: even if the basic axiom looks exactly like the mathema of the discourse of the master – the identity is deceptive, because S1 and S2 result in any case in a barred, divided subject (\$) with object small a (as "waste", so to speak, as loss in any case and as the cause of desire), but do not have to be "master" and "servant". One could at least imagine a different S1 with a different S2 – and one can perhaps also assume that in other societies, at other times, there were completely different terms in these positions (e.g. in matriarchy, in times of subsistence...).

With Lacan (and also with R&A) there seems to be no fundamental difference between the basic linguistic axiom and the discourse of the master. Everything seems to indicate that the two are identical, and that the discourse of the master is not somehow derived, but is simply there and has always been there. On the other hand, we consider (because in our opinion the discourse of the Lord does not necessarily follow from the fundamental axiom) a distinction between the transcendental and the empirical level to be urgently necessary with regard to the linguistic. Whether the basic axiom must necessarily be conceived in (blunt) binary terms or whether it could be opened up/extended (e.g. ternary as suggested by R. Barthes with regard to Asian, non-Western conceptions of language) is an interesting and relevant question (which also concerns Bialluch; 435f.); if there are indeed differences here from a comparative point of view, then the transcendental level is not ahistorical either. The transcendental level is "only" the necessary condition for the possibility of language; for every concrete language, sufficient conditions are required on the empirical level. In any case, the "more open structure with regard to the four discourses" also considered by Bialluch would be possible (430; 434), which Lacan himself has quasi already initiated with his capitalist discourse dancing crazily out of line with his four discourses (which Bialluch ignores as such (as a formula or matheme), but which has triggered the most diverse fantasies in the direction of other, further discourses in guite a few authors). The political goal should be: instead of (capital) domination discourse, another, alternative (democratic, social) discourse domination.

Subject division (\$) and object small a

What the Psa brings to the analysis and critique of capitalism (and what tends to be ignored by orthodox Marx(istic)-oriented thinkers – in contrast, for example, to Critical Theory) is Freud's third narcissistic insult, namely "that the ego is not master in its own house and is oppressed not only for economic reasons" (Bialluch 266). We believe that we use language – but it is the other way round: it uses us (once it has been installed – but by whom?). The subject is split (by language and via primal repression) into conscious/ubw – and that which we call I (ego) and believe to have freedom is a more or less imaginary quantity. S1 – S2, the contrast or binary opposition at issue here (master-servant), must not be thought of merely intersubjectively, but also intrasubjectively. Lacan (with Freud) explicitly rejects the "pure and simple antinomy society-individual" in Sem 7:130 (and also considers it "utterly unthinkable... to speak abstractly of society in our time" – cf. also O. Marchart: The Impossible Object). So it is about structures that rule and govern both "in" the psychic and "in" the social. We speak a capitalist language, or as R&A write: one cannot separate economy and (linguistic)

superstructure (or vice versa); language and economy are inextricably intertwined. Nietzsche writes even more extensively: "The master right to give names goes so far that one should allow oneself to grasp the origin of language itself as an expression of power by the rulers: they say 'this is this and this', they seal every thing and event with a sound and thereby take possession of it, as it were." (Genealogy of Morals; SA 5 p. 260)

In the course of its speaking, the speaking being or language being drops out a subject and because speaking never comes to an end/conclusion (in the sense that it does not achieve univocity, neither the self-representation of "its" ego nor that of the objects desired from object small a), it will always lack something, it will never be able to be enough, but will always have to be more. It is precisely this mechanism that Lacan describes as surplus enjoyment or surplus pleasure (plus-de-jouir or surplus-jouissance), which can be seen (retrospectively) as the result of a renunciation of (a fictitious/ phantasmatic) full enjoyment that is said to have existed at some point (at least before the expulsion from the supposed paradise) - and to which we therefore always want to return further (progress!). So this is not only about a loss, but (as R&A say) always also about the loss of a loss, about the compensation of a loss (253); we find their way of speaking of "entropy" or "loss" somewhat irritating - or do they want to say that the so-called creation of value at some point exhausts itself in the worthless? Lacan (cf. Sem 17:62) seems to have meant that the original loss itself can only be recognized by the production emanating from a (the linking of signifiers): "This entropy, this point of loss, is the only...regular point through which we have access to what enjoyment is all about." Bialluch (249) brings the following Lacanian schema from Sem 16

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and comments: "The object a is unattainable, but it has entered into the phantasm, which, however, develops further and further away from its origin." "The subject is thus firmly united by means of the phantasm and can survive despite the split." (247/48) Thus, object small a is not an object in the sense of an object or the like, but that which "in Lacan's diction: causates desire"; object a has two sides, the remainder and the desire for that which cannot be verbalized, and the surplus/the more or the more desire, which wants wholeness/the whole but never achieves it (Bialluch 227).

When A. Szepanski states about value (Capitalization I:185ff) that it "precisely cannot represent the economy like an empty signifier", because it neither "is" nor "is not", and as such escapes every observer, and says: "It still stands outside the ontic-ontological difference", it is an "unject", has something to do with a "trauma" and with a "circling around the unspoken" - doesn't that sound very much like object small a ? However, Lacan's object small a is not a completely "indeterminate ground of determination"; ground of determination yes, but indeterminate rather not, because a, like \$ as "waste", always depends on S1 and S2. However: because the desired (value) object / desirability is unattainable, the subject(s) is/are virtually treading water here; perhaps the hamster in the wheel is a suitable metaphor: although you run and run, you never reach your goal. In any case, Lacan assumed "that one turns in circles. You turn in circles, but you change levels." (297) That doesn't exactly sound like a revolution. Even if Lacan does not believe in progress, he still considers it possible that the master-signifier "will

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perhaps be a little less stupid"; but "that will not be progress, absolutely speaking" - but (adds Bialluch) "would have the advantage for the subject that it would be curtailed in its dominion over the subject, or... more powerless", which would have the consequence that it could "camouflage the subject's split, its alienation, less well".

What is at stake here is a fundamental, irreversible alienation that Lacan calls alienation. His talk of alienation as alienation is problematic insofar as it suggests that there could be such a thing as a non-alienated (authentic) subject (before language) – but this cannot be assumed because the becoming of the subject depends on linguization (without language there is no subject). Emancipation in this context can therefore neither mean returning to a supposedly non-alienated subject, nor that it would be possible without domination altogether, the question can only (still) be: which S1, which domination? As Marx already said (as Ingo Elbe reminded us), there is no abolition of individuality to be emphasized here (MEW 13:76). If the basic linguistic axiom is transcendental, then "character masks" such as buyer and seller are empirical, historically contingent phenomena - and it would be "silly... to conceive of these economically bourgeois characters... as eternal social forms of human individuality" (13:76). But: "The fundamental alienation of the subject through the effect of language cannot, with Lacan, be eliminated by the reversal of economic relations. It persists beyond all revolutions." (Bialluch 267)

Revolution?

With "master" and "servant" as S1 and S2, the world of the social is not only hierarchically structured, fixed and divided into classes, but also reduced in terms of other possibilities. The fact that S1 as the so-called master signifier does not necessarily have to be the signifier of the master, that a completely different signifier could also function as S1, has been brought into the discussion by Zizek, for example. However, as he said, this presupposes the destitution of the ruling S1 and its substitution by another S1 (the common good, for example), which will then also result in something different for S2, but does not mean that there is no more primal displacement, no divided subject and no object small a. The repetition compulsion will not disappear either, nor will a corresponding overindulgence... In addition, the death instinct must always be taken into account, as well as the unconscious, from where everything can be counteracted or perverted, but also subverted.

Lacan's "revolutionary model" could, however, be more "modest", at least if S1 (the master signifier) really is and always remains only the signifier of the master, i.e. if the basic construction of a so-called social bond were fundamentally feudal. Then S1 can only command the work and generate the knowledge via quarter turns within the framework of the four discourses, but runs the risk of being hystericized and psychoanalyzed, which in the best case could lead to "that the rule of the master-signifier has become weaker" (Bialluch 270). But then the question would have to be answered as to why the conditio humana (from the beginning and forever, because it would then remain with THIS master signifier) only allows feudal structures... Why there can only be one "master"... And always only hierarchically and with a power differential... Is Hegel's struggle for freedom, life and death "the mother" of all domination or an ideologem? While Hegel's "absolute knowledge" is about "the abolition of the antinomy of master and servant" (Bialluch 281), there can be no question of this with Lacan. "Although the master determines, he undergoes castration on the one hand and faces

death on the other in order to gain freedom by sacrificing his innermost being. In both cases, however, which could also be put into one, he must renounce pleasure. From this derives a debt to the master on the part of the slave who places the master between himself and death and has not yet renounced enjoyment himself. For his renunciation of pleasure he is reimbursed for the additional pleasure." (Bialluch 274, where he quotes Lacan from Shem 17:111) "Why does he owe this extra pleasure to the Lord? That exactly is camouflaged. What is camouflaged at the level of Marx is that the master, to whom this extra pleasure is owed, has renounced everything, and first and foremost enjoyment, because he has exposed himself to death and because he remains completely fixed in this position, which Hegel has clearly articulated. He has undoubtedly deprived the servant of the disposal of his body (privé), but this is nothing, because he has left him the enjoyment." (Lacan does not say "servant", but "l'esclave"; French Sem 17:123) "The subjugated part", says Bialluch, "is left with enjoyment in the master's discourse" (274). This is probably the greatest imposition (or toad) of this theme, that the additional pleasure should work in the field of the other (S2), whereas it arises with the master (S1), with his renunciation of enjoyment - why should others compensate for the loss of the one? Because they have also lost, but in a different way? First the land (subsistence), then the means of production and finally the knowledge. What remains is labor power; but the owner of labor power is "someone who has carried his own skin to market and now has nothing else to expect but the tannery" (MEW 23:191).

But what is there to enjoy? To be exploited by capital? Or to (still) be worth something to capital, to be allowed to serve it and to be grateful to it for the work it gives you - the question is: for how much longer? The worker is supposed to make up for the lack of pleasure on the capital side - so that there is finally an end to its enjoyment (see above); "the lack must be kept going" so that "more pleasure can constantly be produced": "On the one hand, ever larger holes are torn and lack is caused, and on the other hand, ever larger holes are supposedly plugged and lack is eliminated." (Bialluch 286) And isn't it very cleverly arranged? "More and more goods are being produced to satisfy supposedly increasing needs, because needs are also being produced. But the commodities fall into a hole without a bottom because they cannot fill this hole" - which conveniently sets the next round of production and consumption in motion... (Bialluch 286/77) But anyone hoping for a purely intersubjective solution to end this nonsense overlooks the intrasubjective problem, which consists in the fact that there can be no full enjoyment, and that it is precisely this lack of pleasure, this hole, which as an object makes small a the motor and driving force for more pleasure and more enjoyment. "Once S1 has appeared... it repeats itself with S2. Through this entering into relation, the subject emerges, represented by something, a certain loss..." On the path of enjoyment, one encounters the "discourse of masochism" (Sem 17:19/20), which brings us to submission, a theme that is also somewhat neglected in R&A. É. de la Boétie had written about "voluntary servitude" in 1574/77, after perhaps the master's discourse at all (at least the earthly one!) had appeared in 1532 - Machiavelli: The Prince.

Fundamentals of the relationship between value, surplus value and surplus pleasure, to the value form and the commodity form – and to the homology assertion

Hypothetical starting point: an economic form with pure production of goods, a distributive economy. Equitable distribution will not necessarily mean: everyone gets an equal slice of the

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cake - this presupposes that all labor contributions (have been) equal. (The possibility that work no longer plays a role and everything is available in abundance remains out of consideration...) So one will ask oneself: how much of the cake against this labor contribution compared to that one? Or: what is (my) labor contribution worth in pie shares? It should be clear that this can neither be read from the labor contribution nor from the piece of cake: neither the cake is a yardstick nor the labor - rather, what is needed is the (un)known tertium comparationis, which makes the impossible, the comparison of apples with pears, possible. This is identical to Marx's question in the value form analysis of how to solve the equation x skirt = y canvas. No commodity production is needed for this, exchange of goods is sufficient here; even a pure distribution economy will not be able to avoid this question... And even in a subsistence economy, this question is unlikely to be suppressed - because someone will always have worked too much and or too little or want to have more of the cake than others... ("compared to you...")

With regard to the commodity form, the value form is only the necessary condition; for the commodity form to exist, something else must be added (as a sufficient condition): as we know, this is a market for which production takes place. Economic forms that produce/ produce commodities for the market are different from economic forms that produce directly for consumption. Buying and selling presupposes the existence of money, i.e. the acquisition of a (preceding) medium of exchange or a means of payment: money for goods, goods for money. This is a different relationship than labor for goods/food - even if this exchange (if it is to be fair) requires the concept of value. Labor for food is different from labor for money or purchasing power - here the labor is wage labor (which does not exist in the above examples).

The uncertainty surrounding the question: how much? naturally stems from the fact that pure equivalence does not exist. When comparing qualitatively different things, there is always an unresolved remainder (the question: did he take advantage of me or did I take advantage of him? can definitely not be answered). This is because the value (the tertium comparationis) is a fictitious or imaginary quantity. Value has no referent, there is always equi- or poly-, never univocity. So something is always missing here - and precisely this, Lacan is right, is the cause of the feeling/thought that it is not enough, that it could be more. Because there is a fundamental lack here (value is not an object that could exist, that "is" or exists) and at the same time the (social) necessity of this "object" (Szepanski says more aptly: Unjekt), it is desired, there is a desire for it; the drive circles around this "object", but cannot reach it... If goal is the "object" around which the drive circles, then its true purpose (aim) is the endless circling, the continuation of this endless story: loss - more desire..., loss - more desire etc. ad infinitum. This is exactly what appears (empirically) as volatility in prices. But - and here Lacan is mistaken - this has nothing to do with what Marx called surplus value.

Surplus value is something else. It does not stem from the fact that there will always be certain residual doubts when it comes to the question of how much money m/a work is worth or how much work can be expected or demanded for this or that money (which partners at eye level will know how to deal with and reach an agreement by mutual consent).

The relationship between capital and labor is a completely different matter. The "game" around the question of "how much?" is anything but a discourse at eye level; the "deal" here

takes place between very unequal "partners": one has the means of production and the money capital, the other has nothing more than his labor power - he is doubly free, as Marx said, but not free not to work in a system where one can only reproduce oneself via wage labor, unless one is wealthy. Here the more has completely different reasons. Superficially, it stems from the fact that here too there is a fundamental non-equivalence between labor and money, that here too any equivalence between money and labor is fundamentally impossible. However, we are not dealing here with labor and money (as a medium of exchange), but with labor and capital, which is a relationship of force and means a power differential. Although the value form (in the sense of the above-mentioned necessary condition) also plays a role here, something else is added (as a sufficient condition): the division of society into classes (into the haves and the have-nots, into employers and employees - which is not a euphemism to describe as a (collective) partnership, but sheer cynicism). Marx left no doubt as to where surplus value comes from (and that this surplus value is something completely different from Lacan's surplus desire, which comes from object small a, i.e. from loss, and plays a quasientropic role in every significant chain of his basic linguistic axiom): according to Marx, surplus value has two sources: one is the expansion and extension of unpaid labor (time) - far beyond the "margin" of uncertainty resulting from the question of equivalence (absolute MW production); the other is the condensation and shortening of necessary (paid) labor time with more efficient working methods and improved technology/machinery (relative MW production). In view of such serious differences in surplus, there can be no question of homology.

Marx's surplus value cannot be derived from Lacan's desire for surplus, it only has to do (remotely) with the fact that this uncertainty, which is given in the case of equivalence, REMAINS and is a precondition for everything else, but not THE (only) - i.e. merely a necessary condition.

The missing sufficient condition is completely outside Lacan's psycholinguistics and also completely outside economics - neoclassicism is an equilibrium model ("freed from the troublemaker profit") and has no explanation for the emergence of profit and for excess, "no idea of it, where profit comes from in capitalism" (Fritz Helmedag, who has been attacked at every level from the ranks of the servant sciences of capitalism because he had previously claimed that the question of "where profit comes from is a closed book for most economists"). Now, as we have known since Marx, this question cannot be answered with equilibrium and homeostasis models.

Digression

No one has ever asked why Lacan's terms for S1 and S2 are "master" and "servant" - it seems to be considered the most natural thing of all: that someone lets others work, others submit to him (voluntarily!?) and work for him... Where does this behavior come from? Is it our tribal history, our descent from apes, alpha males...?

Lacan Milan 1972: The discourse of the master "is the eternal discourse, the fundamental discourse. Man is a strange animal, isn't he? Where is there a master discourse in the animal kingdom? Where would there be a master in the animal kingdom? If it doesn't immediately jump out at you, after the first hearing, that without language there is no master, that the

master never makes himself known through strength or simply or simply commanding, and that you obey, just as language exists." Even if animals naturally know no "masters" and "servants", there are the so-called pecking orders, a dominance and submission behavior, a kind of (master) "discourse without words" - why should this not be an animalistic remnant in the animal ir/rationale?

In Seminar 17:87, Lacan had spoken "of a dominance of woman as mother", "namely as mother who says, mother to whom one makes demands, mother who commands and thus at the same time institutes the dependence of the little human being. The woman allows pleasure to dare the camouflage of repetition. Here she shows herself for what she is, as an institution of camouflage. She teaches her little one how to parade. She leads to more pleasure because she, the woman, like the flower, sinks her roots into pleasure itself. The means of enjoyment are open on the condition that he (the little one) has renounced the closed, the strange enjoyment, the mother. This is precisely where the enormous silent social agreement fits in..." 17:88 is again about the "observation of what it has to do in our culture with the references of the discourse of the Lord to something that has suddenly appeared and... has wrapped itself around this discourse: the evasion of absolute enjoyment, insofar as this is determined by the fact that the silent social convention, by fixing the child to the mother, makes her the chosen seat of prohibitions." (Hvhg from us)

Must we not take note of the fact that the child is confronted with this master language from the very beginning? The mother's task is to bind the child to herself libidinally in order to be able to instill the master's discourse in him. The so-called mother tongue is a master language. This is certainly not pleasant, especially since - as I said - the child is completely dependent on this person. A kind of dilemma, double-bind ... Then the libidinal (latently perverse) bond between mother and child must be severed (the father function). But what has the child learned in the meantime? That it must submit, that it has a master over itself, initially in the form of the mother's character mask, but behind her (and also with the phallus R-S-I "in" her) the father as representative of the master/capital (formerly, before his death: God). A surely lasting experience, a traumatizing experience... (But we must not notice that words are "forced upon us", a parasite the word, a kind of cancer... Sem 23:101) So from here (Oedipus) one is ready and able to submit, well prepared for exploitation - either as exploiter (masterman) or as exploited (sub-human, servant). Is this the transhistorical (214) manner of functioning of every (I modify) ... society (231) mentioned by R&A?

What Zizek discusses about value following Karatani does not refer to the Marxian production of surplus value, but remains entirely reduced to the problem of value. This is a completely accurate analysis or correction of the concept of value. Karatani refers to Kant and sees Marx's concept of value, as it oscillates between Ricardo and Bailey, as an antinomy. However, this in no way explains the profit-making that characterizes capitalism; nor can it be justified by the psycholinguistically "produced" loss (a) and its flip side (surplus desire). Nor can the profit motive be explained (in the last instance) by distinguishing between aim and goal even if this is a completely correct distinction (from Lacan's psa. point of view): but it only explains a nuance in the above-mentioned entropy (loss - extra pleasure), an effect from the basic linguistic axiom S1 - S2 with the subject (\$) and object small a as "waste"; it does not explain the surplus value. In other words: the sufficient condition is missing here. And this

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does not lie in the economic, but in the political - here Zizek has allowed himself to be deceived by his (justifiably brought out) picture puzzle, where one always sees only one or the other. In order for the drive to be able to let off steam as the drive for enrichment (Marx), however, the social conditions for the possibility of enrichment must first have been created, i.e. the class relations. Only where there is the power to exploit a labor relationship, only where labor can be abused for capital interests, is there a field of activity for the enrichment instinct. A look at the so-called original accumulation (which is often overlooked) shows that the linguistic alone is not sufficient here, that completely different "arguments" are needed.

Once again to the derivation/transition from value to surplus value, from money to capital or from surplus-lust to surplus-value

If it is true, as Szep. et al. (whom we follow) believe, that the money form (in Marx) cannot be derived from the value forms, then even in Marx there is no logical transition from value to money. Chapter 4 (The Transformation of Money into Capital) also leaves much to be desired in terms of a logical derivation. This is why Szep, takes the view that one should begin with the concept of capital, i.e. read "Das Kapital" from back to front (from volume 3 to volume 1). What are the arguments in favor of this (also from our perspective)?

Let us look again at Zizek's attempt to "emphasize the strict formal homology between Marx and Freud" (392) - whereby he already starts off wrong when he refers to the "commodity form" and "surprisingly hears Freud's significant insight echoed in it", which he would have discovered in the interpretation of dreams, or more precisely: in dream work: "The dream is basically nothing other than a special form of our thinking, which is made possible by the conditions of the sleeping state. It is the dream work that produces this form, and it alone is the essence of the dream, the explanation of its peculiarity." (Zizek 393; Freud StA II:486 Addition 1925) Quite right, but on what level are we here? At the level of dream production, but not at the level of commodity production! The "dream worker" (a rather strange expression or one reminiscent of alienation; it is inconceivable that in antiquity with its dream interpreters there could ever have been talk of dream work...) is not a wage laborer; he does not work on behalf of a capitalist - even if Freud's "parable" (which presupposes the existence of capitalism but does not justify it) gives this impression (StA II:534/35). If the dream "is a special form of our thinking", then we are here, since thinking thinks in concepts, in the broadest sense on the linguistic level of signifiers and signifieds, of metonymies and metaphors (which Freud described in detail in his Interpretation of Dreams). Those who think they absolutely have to establish an analogy or homology to this level in the economic sphere (but why, if comparisons always limp?) could look at the W-G-W chain, because it is most likely to have a similar problem to the signifier chain: you never know whether this commodity is worth that price, but you can assume that it is not the one (object) that is able to fill my hole; there will always be something missing here that motivates the compulsion to repeat - but it will never have been Marx's surplus value. - So here too there is a homology, because dream labor (in contrast to real (wage) labor) plays out exclusively on the value-form level of the significant chain, where neither goods nor commodities are produced. Thus, the inflationary use of the terms labor and capital threatens to make the modes of speech circular. It is believed that capitalism "explains" the dream and dream labor "explains" capitalism.

Zizek, who, like Marx, can ultimately only presuppose the existence of money but not deduce

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it, does not come to capital in his "four positions in relation to money" (391), but remains stuck with the ambiguities of value. He deals with the absurdities of the value of the commodity (Marx between Ricardo and Bailey) - and then strangely enough (or not) jumps to Proudhon's proposal "to overcome the fetishism of money by introducing a direct 'labour money'" (392), which, however, does not eliminate the fetishism of value, as Marx correctly criticized. But neither from value nor from money does a direct path lead to capital. Nor is it sufficient to derive some kind of money multiplication function from the other money functions - even if it is correct to distinguish, with Deleuze & Guattari, between means of payment flows and money capital flows (anti-Oedipus); here too, money, capital and the desire to multiply are already present. "This potency for multiplication is not given with the exchange or circulation of money, but it necessarily presupposes the capital relation", says Szep. (KuM 25), with which he turns the tables, so to speak, but also immediately asks: "How can this... be justified?" Especially since money has no intrinsic value... This is where the commodity of labor power (i.e. not the dream worker) comes into play, "which, if it is consumed in the production process, generates surplus value." (27) This is not about rêveries, but about real work, about real surplus labour, about a real surplus product (i.e. P' and W'), which, if it can be realized as surplus value, becomes surplus money (MW then becomes G'). We can clearly see here that the (purely) linguistic approach of psychoanalysis lacks a materialist component, without which the whole Marxian chain (G - W - P ... P' - W' - G') cannot exist at all. But is the capitalgenesis problem, simply because a linguistic theory of capital is (of course!) out of the question, satisfactorily solved if one asserts/states: "Capital is an axiom/law that defines that the meaning of the relation G-W-G' first and foremost contains a more that is lacking." (KuM 28)? (KuM 28)? One has then retreated to the following position: "Capital is set as a quasitautological relation to itself (equality), so that only the quantitative difference G-G', i.e. the increase (of money) counts", which is "immoderate" (KuM 27). Which brings us to the linguistic formula variant of the money fetish on p. 29

G G'

G' G" etc., which is rather unsatisfactory because it explains nothing.

To distinguish oneself from Lacan at this point also misses the point, because this distinction is based on the widespread misunderstanding that surplus desire and surplus value are homologous or even identical, "and the anticipation of surplus dominates lack and not vice versa, so that a definition of lack based on Lacan or an account of the economy oriented towards the explication of scarcity... is excluded from the outset." This also misses Lacan's point, because object a is like a picture puzzle, where you always have to deal with both at the same time, even if you only ever see one thing: either the lack (because of more) or the more (because of lack). However, this fact, which follows from the basic linguistic axiom, is at best a necessary condition for Marx's surplus value (which cannot be derived from object small a), but not a sufficient one (of which there needs to be more than one if there is to be profit and gain).

(We consider a genesis of money, value and capital from the sacrificial theory of money to be possible - which is at least briefly hinted at here with reference to Laum, Hénaff, Baudet and others: starting from human sacrifice for a god, it goes via substitutions from animal sacrifice to symbols such as animal tracottas, obolus/se and coins, which initially had no economic purpose to fulfill, but a purely ritual one in the sacrificial cult; whoever goes to Holy

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Communion today or to the Lord's Supper has a purely ritual purpose. Anyone who goes to Holy Communion or to the Lord's Table (altar) today is unlikely to know that this table is a derivative form of the stone on which the animals were sacrificed in the temple - in the temple in Baalbek you can still see the blood drainage channel; and he will also hardly be able to imagine that the taking of bread and wine has a cannibalistic background and a longlasting theological dispute as to whether this IS the body of Jesus or (merely) signifies it; and who does the coin shape of the wafer remind of the obolus? The best one can imagine is that the whole thing was somehow due to a God - a God who was always MORE than oneself, who was EVERYTHING. But this God has - at least in the West, with the Enlightenment been devalued; the last person to seriously deal with the proofs of God was Kant (in the Critique of Pure Reason); but after that things went downhill - and Nietzsche finally declared God dead. Is it pure coincidence that capitalism began to develop fully at virtually the same time, with capital as a quasi-new God (Lafarque) = Lord = S1 in Lacan? This is about several thousand years of history - and that means not only alienation via language learning and appropriation, but also, with the necessity of evaluating the victim and first having to count the sheep and then the money, internalizing the so-called a-signifying semiotics in such a way that they become second nature and are presumably "inscribed" into the neuronal (not the Ubw). (Cf. Guattari, Szep.) This would make them "deeper" than the unconscious...

But even that is not the whole truth, as long as one does not tell the less divine flip side of this story: that of the worldly rulers & conquerors and their slaves & servants - of which the socalled original accumulation is only a part...)

Lacan's assertion of homology in Seminar XVII

Against our view of homology is Lacan's assertion "that surplus-value is surplus-lust" (17:112) which is, however, different from asserting that surplus-lust is surplus-value. There are only a few places in Sem 17 where Lacan comments directly on this - let's take a look at them! (Reference to the German translation)

17:29 "The object a ... I have said that this was the place Marx revealed as surplus-value." – Now, for Marx, surplus value represents, on the one hand, a real surplus product (P', W') produced via surplus labour and, on the other hand, potential, as yet unrealized surplus money (G'). It should be clear that "a" here, if at all, can only have to do with the latter (because "a" is precisely not a real object/product). There is (only) a desire for more of 'a' what Lacan called 'surplus desire'. Does Marx's word "surplus value" have a different function here than making (something) more out of Lacan's Mehrlust?

17:111 Lacan asks: "Why does he (the servant) owe this surplus pleasure to the master? This is precisely what is camouflaged." (Interesting parallel to the camouflage of mother-child, see 17:87 above) "What is camouflaged on the level of Marx is that the master, to whom this extra pleasure is owed, has renounced everything, and first and foremost enjoyment..." 17:112 Which is why the question arises: "How does enjoyment come back into the master's grasp...?" By the Lord's commanding, says Lacan: "The Lord makes a small effort in all of this so that everything runs smoothly, i.e. he gives the command. Simply by fulfilling his function as master, he loses something. This lost something, at least for this reason, must be given back to him something of enjoyment - that is to say, the extra pleasure." One wonders what the poor man loses? And what could the servant have (too much of) pleasure to give back to the master? Can this be

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about "more" than lost human dignity, recognition and respect, etc.? The servant, submissive as he is, says to himself: The poor master has to command me - I really feel sorry for him, I obey him... But then we are even. - No surplus value in the sense of Marx far and wide...

Lacan continues: "If he (the master), through his determination to castrate himself, had not made that surplus-lust countable, if he had not made surplus-value out of it, if, in other words, he had not founded capitalism, then Marx would have noticed that surplus-value is surpluslust." There is no doubt that surplus value - if it can be realized - is surplus pleasure (otherwise it is a loss). But the surplus-lust plays on a different level than that which makes surplus-value possible in the first place: the labor and product-production of the worker. The "pleasure-manko" of the master, which sets this whole process in motion, stems from the fact that he renounces reproducing himself...

"If one does not know what surplus value is, one has not (already) put an end to it because, on the level of socialism in a country, one nationalizes the means of production." Here, however, the party bosses are the masters who let them work for themselves... And Lacan is absolutely right (even if he commits a category error by equating surplus desire and surplus value) to warn against political-economic naivety in the face of object small a. For object small a is treacherous.

Because object small a is treacherous and difficult to grasp! 17:159 reads: "At the time, I did not designate this object with the term Mehrlust, which proves that something had to be constructed before I could call it that." Lacan finds it difficult to say that it is the Mehrlust: "It is the Mehrlust, but it cannot be named, even if it can be approximately named and translated in this way. That is why it has been translated by the term surplus value (because there is no other way to get at it). This object, without which fear is not, can also be approached in other ways..." He had come to this in connection with anxiety, which is "without object"... Here it should be even clearer that the background to Lacan's use of the word surplus value in the conceptual definition of its object small a is a certain helplessness.

17:181 Lacan says that our society "is in the process of throwing off its foundations with giant strides", "because the units of value (there) are progressively changing from a use value into an exchange value". We are "predestined to play the same role in this small mechanics as everything that has to do with the object a in capitalist society, namely to function as surplus value. They are true values in the sense that they are part of this movement, the numerical movement that supports the mode of exchange, the mode of the market that constitutes capitalist society. Only, being an incarnated surplus value is different from being a countable surplus value. If you are an incarnated surplus value, then this collection adds up. The unit of value, that certainly generates things, namely an unease...", things that "are of such a nature that they call into question the society that is at stake, namely capitalist society, quite seriously." (17:182) The more detailed rendition of this passage shows that, seen from object small a, there is a motive to capitalize everything. Lacan calls this surplus value, which since Gary Becker has been called human capital. Neither the one nor the other is Marx's surplus value. But once S1 is capital (and we (S2) its servants), then - indeed - the master-signifier "only appears even more unassailable..., precisely in its impossibility. Where is he? What should we call him? How to locate him? - If not, most certainly, in its deadly effects. Denounce imperialism? But how to stop it, this little mechanism?" (17:198) For one must see (17:197) that

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and "why the Lord's discourse is so solidly established, so solid that few of you, it seems, realize how stable it is. This has to do with what Marx ... demonstrated concerning production, which he calls surplus-value and not surplus-lust." Although Marx (which Lacan seems to ignore) had already spoken of the drive for enrichment (MEW 23:168 and 618). Lacan is content with the following: "From a certain moment in history, something has become different in the discourse of the master. We won't bother ourselves with whether this is because of Luther or because of Calvin or because of I don't know what kind of shipping traffic around Genoa or in the Mediterranean or elsewhere, because the important point is that from a certain day onwards, the excess of desire calculates itself, accounts for itself, adds itself up. There begins what is called the accumulation of capital." (17:197)

une toute petite inversion (a small inversion)

Lacan described capitalist discourse (briefly and cryptically) in his lecture on psa. Discourse in Milan in 1972 as its flip side. He based this on his Discourse of the Lord - and we consider this appropriate. We find all attempts to declare the KapDisk the fifth discourse or to construct a completely new discourse model "from the small interchange of S1 and \$" (which would be theoretically possible if one changed the order of the symbols) superfluous; we also disagree with Tomsic's interpretation when he says that it is not the elements that are interchanged here, but the places: Truth above, agent below; it is correct that the subject should appear here as an autonomous agent and initiator - but for this there is no need to swap places (220). How about trying a different S1 and S2? But that doesn't seem to be possible, as Lacan himself has already said... Admittedly, in the Milan lecture he certainly saw that the Lord's discourse "doesn't go on like that" - that was the reason for the "little swap". He had therefore also said that if anyone knew "what needed to be done to make a revolution", it was the psa. Discourse would know (and "better" than anyone else). But he had also immediately added: "Of course you can't be wrong, eh? To make revolution..." because "this means to return to the beginning" (ça signifie revenir au point de départ). Why? Because (which has been shown historically/ c'est démontré historiquement) "there is no meaner (more insidious/ in fact he says: il n'y a pas de discours du maître plus vache!) gentleman's discourse than where one makes the revolution. You would like things to be different. Of course it could be better. What it would take is to get to the point where the master discourse is a little less simple and, to say it all, a little less stupid (con)."

And then he talks about S1 (le signifiant maître): "It is the signifier that introduced the One into the world, and it is enough that there is the One for it to command S2, i.e. the subsequent signifier. If the One functions, he obeys." The master discourse runs through this privilege – that's all it needs, says Lacan. Andreas Rebers finds that violence is a language that has its own grammar, but that you can simply work out and/or emphasize your argument a little more clearly with a weapon in your hand... In the course of his excavations in Kataba and Saba (Yemen) in 1950/51, Wendell Phillips reported that "sometime shortly before the beginning of the Christian era" the capital of Kataba was attacked and destroyed: "Now a new kingdom emerged – the kingdom of Saba and Dhu-Reidan... 'Dhu-Reidan' means 'The One of Reidan' and possibly refers to the god of Mount Reidan, a conspicuously conical mountain peak at the southern end of Wadi Beihan" (where Phillips had first excavated before going to Marib; W. Phillips p. 199).

But now it is too late: "The crisis, not of the master discourse, but of the capitalist discourse that is its substitute, has begun. It is not at all my intention to tell you that capitalist discourse is ugly; on the contrary, it is something ludicrously ingenious (follement astucieux)... the most ingenious thing that has ever been done as discourse. Nevertheless, it is destined to die. Because it cannot be held. It is untenable in one respect, which I could explain to you. The capitalist discourse is there (Lacan points to the formula on the blackboard). You see it: a small substitution of S1 and \$, which stands for the subject, is enough to make it run by itself. It couldn't run any better. But it runs too fast, it consumes itself (ça ce consomme), it consumes itself so well that it consumes itself (ça ce consume)." He then fears (with a view to his subject) that there could be a truly "pestilent" (pesteux) discourse, "entirely at the service of capitalist discourse", provided "the whole thing doesn't give up the ghost beforehand".

Then, somewhat cryptically, the passage: "The surplus value, that's the more-enjoyment, eh?" He is referring to the people who would have made fun of it... But they would have "said to themselves: 'Well, that's true.' There is only this to make the system work. That is the surplus value. Capitalism has finally caught on to this, this momentum..." It would be better "if people would work a little bit, if they would really question the signifier, the functioning of language... in the same way as the analyst - as I call him... The guy who is in analysis." Then maybe there would have been something in it for her. "You say something, right at the level where the signifier is 'on', the root itself of the signifier. That which makes the signifier work, because you catch the 'on' with it, just there 'there is on'." "...set theory, Cantor and all the others, that consists precisely of asking why the 'one' exists." "You need at least two signifiers. That is, a signifier that functions like an element, what is called an element in set theory: the signifier as the mode according to which the world is structured, the world of the speaking being, i.e. of all knowledge."

(Are we here with Szepanski's explanation of the concept of capital from Laruelle's "unilateral duality", i.e. "the principle of idempotence: 1+1=1."? KuM 39) In any case, Lacan now comes to his basic axiom: "So there is S1 and S2 - we have to start from that in order to arrive at the definition of the signifier is that which a subject represents for another signifier. This subject, this is not what we believe, this is not the dream, the illusion, this is (rather) everything that is determined by the effect of the signifier. And this goes much further than what anyone would be aware of or even understandable (in the sense of comprehensible). This is precisely Freud's discovery: that a whole part of the effects of the signifier completely escapes what we usually call the subject. We know what language produces. What does it produce? What I have called (here) the Mehrgeniessen, because that is the term used at this level, which we know well and which is called desire. More precisely: it produces the cause of desire. And that is what is called object small a. The object small a is the true support (base, frame) of everything we have seen functioning and which functions in an increasingly pure way to specify everyone in their desire. Of this, in analytical experience, a catalog is created under the term drive..." (The drive takes place "in the space between, in the interval of the effects of language".) Here we can see once again that the plus-de-jouir is only the starting point for the desire for more, for the drive for enrichment (Marx), but not (already) the surplus value itself, which, even if it were realized, would never have been enough or would always have been the cause for even more more. From this cause of desire (object small a) "something could perhaps be brought into experience... something that would be a step towards another

construction..." (But who knows: here lurks the deception - le semblant - and the misunderstanding - le malentendu).

In the discussion that follows, another interesting aspect comes up, although it remains somewhat cryptic: the algorithm. One question is: "What role does the algorithmic apparatus ... play in this system? If we are in language, what metalanguage could the signifier chain speak? (...) What is the algorithmic apparatus in such a way that it cannot be grasped in natural language, precisely because there is no metalanguage, because it is not subordinate to the metalanguage? The moment you use an algorithmic apparatus, aren't you trying to plug this hole, this constant slippage of the signifier chain into something that defines it from the outside? Unless the signifier chain is not natural language, but a logical apparatus, an algorithm above it. If you use the algorithmic apparatus to define and block the signifier chain, isn't the algorithmic apparatus the only desire fulfilled?" - What is this about? Is this about the level that determines S1 and S1, i.e. specifically about the question: Why "master"-"servant" (class division) at all? What does Lacan say? "What really gives meaning is always in connection with what I want to call ... the counterpoint. And often such a counterpoint is the ideal, as in mathematical theory. To the extent that the S1, this one of the signifier, functions at two points, in two different places, in this attempt at a radical reduction it can take on a sense of being, if I can put it that way, it translates from one discourse to the other... I'm not saying that this is the only possible formula, but for the moment it can articulate itself in this form of algorithm - so that there is convergence between the limit where mathematical logic is at the moment and the problems that we analysts are trying to master a little bit. That there is convergence, that there is the same algorithmic limit ... the function of this limit ... we cannot simply say." Who knows what we are talking about here? Is he talking about his four discourses (which he sometimes calls algorithms, sometimes formulas, sometimes math)? Or is he talking about the (transcendental) conditions of the possibility of discourse in general (i.e. the transcendental level as an algorithm - wasn't that what the questioner meant?)

Finally, Lacan returns to his starting point: "We question the 'there is' (it exists) at the level of the math, at the level of the algorithm. Only at the level of the algorithm is existence as such acceptable." It doesn't look like the question here is whether there must (always?) be a master and a servant. "It is an effect of history that we question here and now, not as far as our being is concerned, but our existence: that I think, 'therefore I am' - between quotation marks: therefore I am. Existence arose from this, that is where we are now. It is the fact that one says - which is something that suddenly emerges from historical actuality."

Because Lacan's inscription on the blackboard does not reveal the specifically capitalist nature of the discourse, as R&A have tried to work it out (and they, unlike Tomsic, have stuck to Lacan), we suggest a different spelling; instead of

\$ S2

S1 a

 \Rightarrow Ak (TW) Ak = labor power

K A (GW) K = capital and A = labor

This notation maintains that the subject hypertrophies and considers itself (again) the master

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of the house; this applies (more or less) to every subject, whether capitalist or proletarian. We agree with Szep. when he says, distinguishing himself from Marx, that capital is not an automatic subject; we would rather say that the subject today (\$ on the agent position) is an automatic subject, because capital is the psycho- & socio-economic-transcendental condition of possibility for "society" and "capitalist money" is already 'socially' recognized as "a social fact as a result of a-thematic rules that are followed quasi automatically by economic actors, and is so desired that it includes the expectation of the desire of others" (KuM 22, 24).

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